

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 32, 37, and 42 as listed in the following listing of the claims, which replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-15 (Canceled).

16. (Previously Presented) A decoding system comprising:

synchronization code detecting means for detecting a synchronization code at one of a plurality of synchronization code inserting positions predetermined at periodic intervals in an input code string;

demultiplexing means for demultiplexing said input code string on the basis of the position of the synchronization code detected by said synchronization code detecting means, to produce kinds of compressed codes; and

decoding means for decoding said compressed codes to output a reconstructed signal, each of the kinds of compressed codes being a variable length code.

17. (Previously Presented) A decoding system as set forth in claim 16, which further comprises code string transforming means for transforming a code string other than said synchronization code, which is transformed so that a Hamming distance from said synchronization code is equal to or greater than a predetermined value at said one of

the plurality of synchronization code inserting positions of said input code string, into an original code string.

Claims 18-30 (Canceled).

31. (Original) A decoding system as set forth in claim 16, wherein said input code string comprises a multiplexed code string, which is multiplexed for each of a plurality of layers, a synchronization code being added to at least a part of said plurality of layers.

32. (Currently Amended) A decoding system as set forth in claim 31, which further comprises code string transforming means for transforming a code string other than said synchronization code, which is transformed so that a Hamming distance of the transformed code string from a synchronization code which has a shortest length of synchronization codes having different lengths in a part or all of added layers, is equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

33. (Previously Presented) A decoding system as set forth in claim 16, wherein said one of the plurality of synchronization code inserting positions depends on a code length of each of the kinds of compressed codes.

34. (Previously Presented) A decoding system comprising:

a synchronization code detector configured to detect a synchronization code at one of a plurality of synchronization code inserting positions predetermined at periodic intervals in an input code string;

a demultiplexer configured to demultiplex said input code string on the basis of the position of the synchronization code detected by said synchronization code detector, to produce kinds of compressed codes; and

a decoder configured to decode said compressed codes to output a reconstructed signal, each of the kinds of compressed codes being a variable length code.

35. (Previously Presented) A decoding system as set forth in claim 34, which further comprises a code string transformer configured to transform a code string other than said synchronization code, which is transformed so that a Hamming distance from said synchronization code is equal to or greater than a predetermined value at said one of the plurality of synchronization code inserting positions of said input code string, into an original code string.

36. (Previously Presented) A decoding system as set forth in claim 34, wherein said input code string comprises a multiplexed code string, which is multiplexed for each of a plurality of layers, a synchronization code being added to at least a part of said plurality of layers.

37. (Currently Amended) A decoding system as set forth in claim 36, which further comprises a code string transformer configured to transform a code string other than said synchronization code, which is transformed so that a Hamming distance of the transformed code string from a synchronization code which has a shortest length of synchronization codes having different lengths in a part or all of added layers, is equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

38. (Previously Presented) A decoding system as set forth in claim 34, wherein said one of the plurality of synchronization code inserting positions depends on a code length of each of the kinds of compressed codes.

39. (Previously Presented) A decoding method comprising:
detecting a synchronization code at one of a plurality of synchronization code inserting positions predetermined at periodic intervals in an input code string;
demultiplexing said input code string on the basis of the position of the synchronization code detected by said synchronization code detector, to produce kinds of compressed codes; and
decoding said compressed codes to output a reconstructed signal, each of the kinds of compressed codes being a variable length code.

40. (Previously Presented) A decoding method as set forth in claim 39, which further comprises transforming a code string other than said synchronization code, which is

transformed so that a Hamming distance from said synchronization code is equal to or greater than a predetermined value at said one of the plurality of synchronization code inserting positions of said input code string, into an original code string.

41. (Previously Presented) A decoding method as set forth in claim 39, wherein said input code string comprises a multiplexed code string, which is multiplexed for each of a plurality of layers, a synchronization code being added to at least a part of said plurality of layers.

42. (Currently Amended) A decoding method as set forth in claim 41, which further comprises transforming a code string other than said synchronization code, which is transformed so that a Hamming distance of the transformed code string from a synchronization code which has a shortest length of synchronization codes having different lengths in a part or all of added layers, is equal to or greater than a predetermined value.

43. (Previously Presented) A decoding method as set forth in claim 39, wherein said one of the plurality of synchronization code inserting positions depends on a code length of each of the kinds of compressed codes.